

DCSS Customer Service Satisfaction Survey

PURPOSE OF THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY:

Between July and December 2001, the Department of Child Support Services implemented a statewide Customer Service Satisfaction Survey. The primary purpose of the survey was to obtain the first statewide measures of client satisfaction with child support services, while providing comparable measures within the fifty-eight counties. In addition, it provides information about the characteristics and needs of custodial parents, non-custodial parents, and other caretakers. To achieve this, a randomly drawn set of 10,111 clients was interviewed by telephone about their experiences with their local child support agency.

WHO WAS INTERVIEWED

- 62% of the respondents interviewed are Custodial Parents (CPs); 38% are Noncustodial Parents (NCPs)

GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

- About three-fourths of the respondents have gotten a support order (CPs 72%; NCPs 79%); 43% have requested a modification (CPs 36%; NCPs 54%); and nearly three-fourths of the cases have had enforcement (CPs 72%; NCPs 77%)
- Overall satisfaction with the agency was mixed: about half were satisfied; about 40% were dissatisfied
- NCPs were consistently less satisfied than were CPs

SATISFACTION WITH LAST CONTACT WITH THE AGENCY

- 84% of the respondents interviewed have had direct contact with the agency
- Half of those had contact within the last 6 months; about one-third had contact over a year ago
- Two-thirds of respondents contacted the agency by phone, one-third in person; CPs are more likely than NCPs to be in telephone contact
- Respondents were satisfied with the agency personnel during the last contact: about three-fourths of the CPs and two-thirds of the NCPs were satisfied with how well the staff listened, answered questions, and generally treated the clients
- Assessment of the last contact, 71% of CPs and 57% of NCPs voicing satisfaction; while, 37% NCPs said they were dissatisfied with their last agency contact

COLLECTION INFORMATION

Reported Payment History:

- Support orders have been established for about two-thirds of the CPs contacted
- CPs and NCPs tell different stories about how closely NCPs are complying with court ordered child support payments
- Just over half of the CPs say the NCP is in full compliance, while 85% of the NCPs report full compliance
- Asked a different way, 37% of CPs said the NCP was never in compliance with the order; 13% of the NCPs said they were never in compliance

- Most CPs (72%) and NCPs (84%) report that one of them provides medical coverage for the child
- Over half of the NCPs have payments deducted from their paychecks

Other Support:

- The most commonly reported additional items provided by NCPs were clothing, additional cash, and food.
- Proportionally, over 4 times as many NCPs as CPs report that NCPs provide such items.

CONTACT WITH THE OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN CASE

- Half of the respondents said they had been in touch with the other parent within the past 3 months
- About half of the CPs and three-quarters of the NCPs said the NCP was in touch with the child in the past 3 months
- NCPs who have not been in touch with the child in over 3 months give different reasons (CP doesn't allow it, location of child unknown) than CPs (NCP has no desire for contact)

OTHER ATTITUDES ABOUT SERVICES

Effects of Services

- About three-fourths of the respondents said that their dealings with the agency are important to them
- Two-thirds of CPs said that their ordered amount of support would keep them off public assistance programs
- Less than one-third of respondents said their interactions with the agency made them more aware of their responsibilities as a parent

Additional Services:

- Respondents thought a wide range of additional agency services would be beneficial
- The three thought most beneficial were legal counseling, parent-child relationship counseling, and employment services, with little difference among them

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age, Education, Marital Status:

- The average respondent age was about 38 years
- 23% did not finish high school; 10% have a college degree
- Over one-third of respondents are married and living with their spouses; 26% are divorced; 27% have never been married
- More NCPs than CPs are married; more CPs than NCPs have never been married

In the Home:

- 62% of the respondents live in a single-family home; 60% of respondents rent their living quarters; 27% own them
- English is the first language in 81% of the homes interviewed, Spanish in 15% (The survey was conducted only in English and Spanish)
- Most CPs have 1 or 2 children who live with them the majority of the time
- Most NCPs have one or no child who lives with them the majority of the time

Ethnicity/Race:

- 38% of respondents said they were of Hispanic origin when asked about their ethnicity
- When asked about their race, 43% said they were White, 31% said Hispanic/Latino, 15% said Black/African-American, 3% said Asian or Pacific Islander, and 3% said American Indian or Alaskan Native

Jobs and Income:

- About three-fourths of respondents said they were covered by medical insurance (more CPs than NCPs)
- 53% of respondents reported monthly incomes of less than \$1500; 14% bring in less than \$500 per month; 6% have incomes of over \$5000 per month
- Two-thirds of respondents said they were employed (more NCPs than CPs)
- 12% of respondents said they were students; about one-third of those are full-time
- About two-thirds of the respondents said their primary source of income was their job (more for NCPs than for CPs)
- 19% of CPs and 10% of NCPs reported welfare benefits as their main source of income

If you have any additional questions regarding the DCSS Customer Satisfaction Survey, please contact the DCSS Office of Public Affairs at (916) 464-5188